Medicine Hat
The Gas City

MEDIA RELEASE

Alberta's 25

City of Medicine Hat - 580 First Street S.E. - Medicine Hat, Alberta, T1A 8E8 - (403) 502-8071

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 30, 2007

SMOKING BYLAW COMES INTO EFFECT IN ONE MONTH

May 31 World No-Tobacco Day

Medicine Hat – In one month Medicine Hat will be 100 per cent smoke-free in all public and work places.

City Council approved a new Smoking Bylaw, which comes into effect on World No-Tobacco Day May 31, 2007.

Smoking Bylaw 3762 stipulates that no person shall smoke:

- inside a building;
- within three (3) metres of an entrance or exit to a building or within three (3) metres of a ventilation system air intake for a building;
- on a balcony of a building;
- in an outdoor area of a restaurant or drinking establishment such as a patio, where consumption of food or beverages is allowed; or
- inside a public vehicle (school bus, taxi, City-owned vehicle, transit bus, or other vehicle that transports people for a fee or as a complimentary service)

"The City of Medicine Hat is committed to building healthier communities by promoting the health, safety and welfare of its residents," says Mayor Garth Vallely. "The Smoking Bylaw will limit public exposure to second hand smoke and create healthier workplaces for all workers."

The provisions of the bylaw do not apply to private living accommodations or hotel rooms which are considered private living accommodations.

No proprietor of a place where smoking is prohibited by this bylaw shall permit smoking or ashtrays in their establishment.

Proprietors of bingos, casinos, drinking establishments or restaurants must ensure that No Smoking signs are posted at each entrance to their businesses. Electronic No Smoking signs can be downloaded from the Bylaw Enforcement website.

Starting May 31, a person who contravenes any provision of the bylaw is guilty of an offence and punishable on summary conviction to pay a fine of not less than $250 and not more than $10,000, or in default of payment to a period of imprisonment of not more than one year. If the violation ticket so provides, a person may make a voluntary payment of $200 in lieu of a court appearance.

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"Medicine Hat will not have a grace period so enforcement will begin May 31," says Bylaw Enforcement Superintendent Fred Crittenden. "In April we began a campaign to provide information to the public so they are aware of and understand the bylaw."

The City is distributing a Smoke Free Bylaw brochure through the Utility Statements in April and May. Information, including frequently asked questions, is available on the City and Bylaw Enforcement websites. Letters have been sent to casinos, bingos, drinking establishments and restaurants to advise them of the No Smoking sign requirements. Posters have also been supplied to these businesses to assist them with informing their customers about the new Smoking Bylaw.

Crittenden reminds proprietors of businesses or buildings that if an individual is smoking in your establishment you must advise the customer of the provisions of the Smoking Bylaw. If the customer refuses to comply you are to ask them to leave and may report them to Bylaw Enforcement by phoning 529-8400.

For more information on the Smoking Bylaw, including compliance and enforcement, refer to the Smoke Free Bylaw brochure, frequently asked questions, or contact Bylaw Enforcement 529-8400.

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For further information, please contact:

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